

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

The claims 2, 9-11, 13-14, 17-19, 23-25, and 27-49. Claim 22, which the Examiner indicated contained allowable subject matter, has been rewritten in independent form by amending claim 19 to incorporate the subject matter of claim 22. Claim 26, which the Examiner also indicated contains allowable subject matter, has been rewritten in independent form by amending claim 24 to incorporate the subject matter of claim 26. Accordingly, claims 22 and 26 have been canceled, claims 23 and 40, which previously depended on claim 22, have been amended to depend on claim 19, as amended, and claims 27 and 41, which previously depended on claim 26, have been amended to depend on claim 24, as amended. Reconsideration is expressly requested.

Claims 24, 10, 19, 42, 45, 28, 37, 46, and 47 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by *Ohkubo et al.*, U.S. Patent No. 5,862,240. The remaining claims that were rejected by the Examiner were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over *Ohkubo, et al.* in view of *Bowen et al.*, U.S. Patent No. 5,561,737 (claims 31, 34, 32 and 35), *Zakarauskas et al.*, U.S. Patent No. 5,526,433 (claims 33, 35, 43 and 11), *Kaneda et al.*, U.S. Patent No. 4,536,887 (claims 38, 29, and 49), or *Zakarauskas and Sibbald et al.*, U.S. Patent No. 5,600,727

(claims 44 and 48) for the reasons set forth on pages 2-7 of the Office Action.

The Examiner has also indicated, however, that claims 17, 2, 13, 14, 39, 18, 25, 30, and 9 were allowed and that claims 22, 23, 40, 26, 27 and 41 contained allowable subject matter. In other words, claims 22, 23, 40, 26, 27 and 41 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form, including all limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims, along with claims 17, 2, 13, 14, 39, 18, 25, 30 and 9, which were allowed.

In response without conceding the propriety of the rejections and in order to expedite prosecution of this case, Applicant has amended claim 19 to incorporate the subject matter of claim 22; has amended claim 24 to incorporate the subject matter of claim 26; has amended claims 23 and 40 to depend on claim 19; has amended claims 27 and 41 to depend on claim 24, and has canceled claims 22 and 26. Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that all claims are now in condition for allowance.

In summary, claims 19, 23, 24, 27, 40 and 41 have been amended, and claims 22 and 26 have been canceled. In view of the

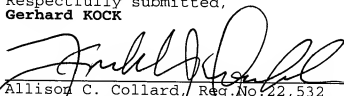
foregoing, it is respectfully requested that the claims be allowed and that this case be passed to issue.

Applicant reserves the right to prosecute the previously rejected claims prior to the amendments herein in a continuation or divisional application.

Applicant also submits herewith a Supplemental Information Disclosure Statement.

Respectfully submitted,
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I hereby certify that this correspondence is being deposited with the U.S. Postal Service as first class mail in an envelope addressed to: Commissioner of Patents, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450 on April 16, 2007.



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